

*The preservice teacher  
knows the discipline...*

*Special Education*  
(Grades K-12)

## Introduction

The following competencies are intended to clarify Standard 1.1, "... knows the discipline," in the N-STEP process. The competencies are firmly rooted in the profession's best knowledge and practices. They are drawn from guidelines established by the Council for Exceptional Children. The competencies are broadly stated with the intent that teacher preparation institutions will determine the breadth and depth of material for meeting the competencies. The statements represent the minimum expected of beginning teachers in order to be licensed to teach.

Competencies common to all special educators are listed at the beginning of this document. Disability-specific competencies are located within separate sections. Special educators who practice in a specific area(s) of disability must possess the disability-specific knowledge and skills in addition to the common competencies.

The beginning (preservice) teacher of students who have special needs will demonstrate a knowledge of and/or competency in the following areas of study:

<b>1. Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Historical, social, and political issues which impact the field of special education and their relationship to developments in the field;</li> <li>2. The roles of community and advocacy groups and their influence on developments in special education;</li> <li>3. Models, theories, and philosophies that provide the basis for special education practice;</li> <li>4. Issues in definition, identification and placement procedures for individuals with disabilities; and</li> <li>5. The legal basis and procedures including statutes, regulations, and case law which impact individuals with disabilities.</li> </ol>
<b>2. Characteristics of Learners</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Characteristics of normal, delayed, different, and disordered communication patterns of individuals with disabilities;</li> <li>2. The effect of one or more disabilities on an individual's learning; and</li> <li>3. Effects of medical, psychosocial, genetic, and/or environmental conditions on the educational, cognitive, physical, social, behavioral and emotional needs of individuals with disabilities.</li> </ol>
<b>3. Assessment, Diagnosis, Evaluation, and Programming (Special Education Process*)</b>  <i>*as identified by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal and ethical concerns, regulations, and guidelines regarding compliance with the Special Education Process;</li> <li>2. Appropriate selection, administration, modification, and interpretation of informal and formal assessment procedures and instruments;</li> <li>3. Commonly used principles and terminology of psychometrics;</li> <li>4. Strategies that consider the impact of diversity on assessment, eligibility, programming, and placement of individuals with disabilities;</li> <li>5. Continuum of placement and service delivery models available for individuals with disabilities emphasizing appropriateness in meeting individual needs;</li> </ol>



The beginning (preservice) teacher of students who have special needs will demonstrate a knowledge of and/or competency in the following areas of study:

<b>Assessment, Diagnosis, Evaluation, and Programming</b> <i>(continued)</i>	6. Methods for monitoring, recording, evaluating, and reporting performance of individuals with disabilities in the four domains (academic/vocational, domestic/self-help, recreational/leisure, community functioning); 7. Understanding of the sequence and interrelatedness of each step of the Special Education Process; and 8. The terminology and impact of medical, therapeutic, and educational information on assessment and programming.
<b>4. Instructional Content and Practice</b>	1. Research-supported instructional practices, strategies, and materials used across the continuum of service delivery models; 2. Curricula for the instruction of motor, sensory, cognitive, academic, social, language, affective, and functional life skills for individuals with disabilities; 3. Accessing and acquiring curricular content knowledge as needed; 4. Techniques and assistive devices and services for modification of educational methods, materials, curricula, and physical environments; and 5. Providing supports to students making age and grade level transitions including the transition to adult life.
<b>5. Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment</b>	1. Effective classroom management theories, methods, and techniques for individuals with disabilities incorporating research-supported practices; 2. Universal precautions to maintain healthy and safe environments; 3. Understanding when and how to access specialized resources, including funding sources; 4. Strategies for using technology to enhance the teaching and learning environment; 5. Strategies for managing time, schedules, and other associated variables for providing instruction; 6. Strategies for utilizing mentors and role models in programming for students with disabilities; and 7. Strategies for directing the activities of a classroom paraprofessional and others in an assisting role.



The beginning (preservice) teacher of students who have special needs will demonstrate a knowledge of and/or competency in the following areas of study:

<b>6. Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal and ethical standards regarding behavioral support systems for individuals with disabilities;</li> <li>2. Community affiliation and advocacy issues and their influence on self-advocacy;</li> <li>3. Strategies for crisis prevention/intervention;</li> <li>4. Analyzes communicative intent of behavior (i.e. behaviors are messages); and</li> <li>5. Pragmatic language skills needed for social, educational, and functional-living environments.</li> </ol>
<b>7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strategies to promote access to information and facilities for individuals, families, school and community;</li> <li>2. Strategies to provide the appropriate communication access for individuals, families, school and community;</li> <li>3. Strategies to address concerns of families, teachers, students, and community related to individuals with disabilities;</li> <li>4. Collaboration skills necessary to participate as an active and knowledgeable member of an educational team;</li> <li>5. Roles, responsibilities, and expertise of individuals with disabilities, families, teachers, administrators, and ancillary and support personnel in planning and delivering an individualized program;</li> <li>6. Strategies to address social and emotional issues that impact individuals with disabilities and their families;</li> <li>7. General classroom settings, curriculum, and instructional strategies;</li> <li>8. Techniques that can be used to provide and support services in general education settings; and</li> <li>9. Strategies for developing effective behavioral support systems within and across school and community settings.</li> </ol>
<b>8. Professional and Ethical Practices and Resources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consumer organizations accessed by individuals with disabilities;</li> <li>2. Ethical practices as defined by appropriate professional learned societies; and</li> <li>3. Educational reform initiatives at the state and national level.</li> </ol>